

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, December 20, 2012

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**Congresswoman Matsui Statement on Senator Steinberg's Call for Further Investment in Mental Health**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) released the following statement praising California State Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg for his leadership on mental health issues and his call to action for further investment:

“Our nation must invest in the mental health of our citizens to ensure that all Americans have access to the quality care and services they need. I am pleased that Senator Steinberg is raising this important issue and furthering the discussion. He has been an advocate for mental health for many years, and it is critical that we have as many voices calling for investment on this important issue as possible. All levels of government and the medical community must work together to meet the needs of individuals who are facing mental illness and struggling to receive the services they need.

“Community mental health providers have been ignored for far too long. It is time for mental health to be treated on a level playing field with the rest of our nation's healthcare system. The federal government must step up and protect the mental health safety net, which has faced tremendous struggles across the country. That is why in June 2012 I, along with Senator Stabenow (D-MI), introduced H.R. 5989, The Excellence in Mental Health Act, which increases access to community behavioral health services for all Americans and provides Medicaid reimbursement for these services.

“In Newtown Connecticut we witnessed an unspeakable tragedy. As we struggle to move forward in its aftermath, there is no question that it is past time to strengthen our gun control laws. What is also evident is that we must raise awareness of - and invest in - mental health. The vast majority of individuals with mental illness will never turn to violence; however if we can ensure that everyone living with a mental illness is able to receive the treatment they need, then we can take a step toward preventing future acts of violence.”

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